PEDRO THE MISOGYNISTIC SPIDER

The first time I saw Pedro the spider was last fall—and I was mid-bite into a pumpkin-spice hotdog. He came swinging from a tree and landed dramatically on my sandwich.

"I told ya, man," he said, wiping mustard off one of his eight legs.

"I... what?"

He looked me dead in the eyes—like, all eight of his locked onto my two and screamed:

"THERE IS NO WOMAN ON THIS EARTH I GENUINELY LIKE. EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM IS JUST A BODY I WANT TO EXPERIENCE."

I was as confused as anybody would. Aside from the talking spider, of course.

"Excuse me?" I said. I think he must've mistaken me for someone else. I told him that but he doubled down.

"No, no. You're Danny, right? C'mon, Danny, I know that long face from anywhere!"

Now I was self-conscious about my long face. But one thing I wasn't self-conscious about was my name. And it definitely wasn't Danny.

So I laid it out for him. "Look, man. I wanna eat this hotdog," I explained. "Also, my name's Steven. Not Danny..." He looked at me, confused, and tilted his head the same way a disabled puppy might. Then he ran to the end of the table and started yelling about my tattoos. Said they looked like an edgy middle school girl drew them on me. People started glancing over, watching me

talk to an empty picnic table. It was Oktoberfest, and I was here alone, arguing with a spider that no one can see while a bunch of white Virginians stared at the sideshow.

"Look here," I said. "My name's Steven! Not Danny-"

"Hey Steven! You good?!" my friend Liz hollered.

Liz was a good friend of mine. I came to the festival to eat hot dogs and beer with her, although she ditched me earlier. She had a whole chili dog and the bun was so oiled up with grease it can lube up the engine of your car. Or something else if you're a little freak.

Liz took a bite along with this innocent childlike face just standing there looking at me to say something.

"Who's this bitch?" the spider said.

"Ay! Watch your language!" I said to him.

I looked up to Liz. Parts of food falling from her open mouth...

"Did I just hear that fucking bug talk!?"

"Not so loud." I countered.

"The hell you mean not so loud?! There's a talking bug!"

The spider said, "Look, I am no harm to ya sweetie! My name is Pedro."

"Pedro." I said. " I have two qualms with this. First, Why is your name Pedro? Second. I'm sure you said something about how you like to use women's bodies..."

"Ew." Liz grunted.

"That's not what I said, Danny?!" Pedro yelled.

"It's Steven."

He quickly went up my arm climbing to the top of my head. He said to my friend, "Listen babe. How would you like a drink?"

"Free?"

"Margaritas. I know a place."

"Hmm." she hummed.

"Thanks for the invite." I intruded.

"Fine, we'll all get drinks. I know a bar. Used to flirt with the bartender. But the bitch has real hairy arms."

"Like a *spider* bartender?" Liz questioned.

"No. Like the actual barkeep. Human." he answered. "Though, she kinda looks a whore. I sometimes wonder if she shaves her pussy. And I imagine if she does it looks likes a cactus fuzz within a couple hours–"

"OK. Pedro, that's enough." I said.

"My bad..."

We went to the bar he suggested. Liz drove us in her car but mainly she was looking at her phone cause she wouldn't stop changing songs. Somehow she was able to drive perfectly by seeing from her ears.

Once we arrived we sat at the barstools and the bartender was this woman named Stacy. Pedro spoke to her in such a delightful manner. After she went to shake up our drinks he told me that he puts everything on his wife's tab.

"Oh!" said Liz. "That's exactly what Jonathan Cassidy does all the time at Huddy's."

"Whos that?" he asked.

"It's Alison's Mondragon coworker at Delta. Whenever we go to Huddy's. We always use his wife's card–"

"Who the hell are any of these names?!"

"Don't mind her," I chipped in. "She really loves identifying."

"Yeah unless it's about me."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"You called me a fucking bug."

"You are, aren't you?"

"I'm an arthropod."

"OH NO NO NO! *DANG* IT. I SHOULD KNOW THIS." she started slapping her head with her palms. "I took an entomology class two years ago..."

The bartender came with the drinks.

But it was ass. It was almost as bad as the Margarita's I had at this Irish bar in Mexico City. Liz was with me at that time as well but ditched me for some Irish folks. Though, they were upset after I called them British because they were from Northern Ireland and not the Republic of Ireland. Oh you should've seen me. I was a fucking dickhead. I guess some Irish people don't like being called British. I mean that makes sense when you think about history. But I don't think bout history. Shit. Balls. I don't think of anything productive. Except for what I'm thinking of right now, which is this story writing to you.

My bad.

I think I'm getting side tracked again because the next thing I knew, Liz was gone. They were talking to a bunch of people at the end of the bar and I couldn't find

Pedro. I went on walking around the bar. It was very dimmed in there and the drink was not working its way through me. Matter of fact. It went through me! I went to the bathroom and let the rumble in my belly take its course through the roads of my intestines. The shits of liquid made it to the finish line–down to the toilet bowl and I wiped myself clean. I wish only that I had some baby powder.

In an instant I heard a bang in the bar. Some commotion. When I came out there was a lady. Very attractive and pale with black hair. Figure of an hour glass.

"YOU LITTLE EIGHT EYED FUCK!" she yelled.

"Baby calm down!" Pedro screamed.

I ran to Liz and asked what happened. She said that it seems to be Pedro's wife. She said something about looking through his phone.

"...This spider has a phone?"

The hot lady ran around the bar chasing Pedro. Everyone stood in silence watching her great body run swiftly through the room.

Then she got him by one of his legs with the back of her high heel shoes.

"HONEY! LET GO OF MY LEG! PLEASE BABY PLEASE!"

"WHY?! SO YOU CAN GO BACK ON YOUR GOD DAMN PHONE SAVING PICTURES OF 16 YEAR OLD GIRLS?!"

"Ooooooooh." A bunch of ladies at the bar echoed.

"PLEASE PLEASE!"

"I'M GONNA *KILL* YOU COCKSUCKER!"

She got her beautiful long left leg up while holding Pedro down with the other and aimed with the back of her pointy high heels towards him.

"...you." Pedro said quietly. "Fucking *used* up whore..."

She stomped loudly. Only once.

There was quietness. The air was silent with stillness. The oxygen felt motionless.

Liz came to my ear, "Let's leave..."

We walked away quietly with only our tippy toes. When abruptly the glass door to the bar outside became darker gradually. Light began to shrink around us. We looked closer and hundreds of spiders forming webs could be seen covering the windows inside as well as most of the lightbulbs with an exception of some.

It was darker when someone curiously asked the barkeep. "Um, Stacy... What's this woman's name."

"Eh, its Widow... She's Pedro's wife..."

She started to grow bigger but her sexy form was dissolving. She morphed into a hair-like spider creature with 12 eyes. People started to scream and women ran behind the bar dialing 911 while praying to God.

Liz and I ran to the bathroom while the giant Widow was making these hissing noises so loudly it vibrated the floors. There was screaming and muffled bangs coming from the walls.

I began to panic, cursing over and over. Liz became angrier...

"What are we going to do!?"

"We can either wait here for the police or try finding our way out."

"You saw those fucking bugs!" I said, while holding against the door just in case. "Those spiders webbed it up so well that if we broke it, it'd still be a hassle to cut through it all!"

"Okay... So what if we burn it?"

"Burn it? With what? A flame thrower?"

"Bruh, we're at a bar."

"OK. I see where you might be getting at but we don't have a lighter?! Do we?"

"I do."

"Why!?"

"I smoked with my roommate before coming out with you."

We went out and saw bloody bodies dead wrapped in webs. The bar was a wide nest and cautiously, we avoided touching any cobwebs. We saw her. The giant beast in a corner with her hairy round back facing us. White giant spider eggs near her body hanging next to her.

We went behind the bar and no one was there. Liz got a pitcher and started putting vodka with tequila in it.

"Shush!" I whispered. "You're pouring that shit too loud!"

She poured two pitchers of liquor.

"Ready?"

I shook my head in agreement. Following that she passed me a bottle of tequila.

"Wanna take it hit? One for the road?"

We took a hit. We had a pitcher in one hand facing the wall where the windows and door were and in the other of our other hands was a burning rag we lit. We counted to 3 then threw the pitchers. Hissing can be heard as the building rumbled. We threw our rags quickly after that towards the pitchers. The place began to burst up in flames.

Smoke covered the air and we cough viciously. The giant Widow crawling around the ceiling screaming louder than the thousands of spiders hissing.

"MY CHILDREN! MY CHILDREN! KILL THEM!"

Liz and I jumped over the bar. We held hands while covering our mouths. We ran, aiming our shoulders towards the glass windows hoping to break through the burning webs and flames.

We charged. Suddenly we were wrapped in webs. The screams of the giant Widow could be heard melting simultaneously bleeding through the air as the fiery flames between us became yellowish green. Cobwebs around Liz and I began to form in bright purple highlighted colors and the smoke surrounding us became a pinkish cloud that grew brighter...

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Steven and Liz tumbled from the branches of a tree, landing hard in the grass. The branches scratched, the ground stung, but they were alive. Slowly, they pulled themselves up, looked at each other, and collapsed into a tight hug. Their breaths shook, their tears mixed. For a moment, they simply existed—silent, trembling, relieved.

Then, faintly, a band struck up on a nearby stage. Oktoberfest. Somehow, impossibly, they were back. Yet they were unnoticed by the crowd afar.

Steven opened his mouth to make sense of it, but Liz shook her head. “Don’t. Let’s never talk about this again.”

He conceded with a nod. She was right. No one would believe them anyhow. They left the festival without a word, slipping into a convenience store on a nearby corner. Arms full of snacks and cheap beer, they stepped up to the register. Next in line.

“Wait,” Liz said, as she darted back down an aisle. She returned a moment later quickly, setting a single can of bug spray on the counter.